

# Parish exemplifies joy in the Lord

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Sunday morning broke bright and beautiful in western New York. The sun shone, the earth was fresh and green, and all was quiet as I made the early morning drive to Honeoye to celebrate with the community of St. Mary's and participate in the blessing of their new parish center. I saw more deer than cars as I made my way south and enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on the achievement of the parish and on the many benefits their new center would bring to the community.

By the time I arrived I was quite anxious to see the new addition. It is even more impressive than I thought it would be, and it became clear immediately that the parish community is proud and happy that they can now enjoy such an important resource. That's understandable. It will enhance social life, educational programs and will allow the community to be creative in the ways in which they grow together and go about the work of the kingdom.

It will not surprise you to know that one of the highlights of the visit was the chance to be with Father Mike Hogan. I find it difficult to explain about Mike. Suffice it to say that I smile when I hear his name and don't stop laughing for at least 15 minutes after I have left his company. Who else but Mike could rise after the Gospel story of the Good Shepherd and say to the congregation, "We're certainly happy to welcome the bishop, our good shepherd, to Honeoye today. Of course, he can't pull the



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**LONG THE WAY**

wool over our eyes!"

Mike's joyful spirit was typical of what I experienced on that lovely Sabbath morning. I think of the gathering. People take time to greet one another and make visitors feel welcome. One gets a sense that people look forward to going to church, that Sunday worship is a pleasant and rewarding activity. It seemed to me that this was true with the young ones of the parish. There were lots of them and they were full of life.

That lively spirit among the young was no more beautifully expressed than by Amy Hargrave who proclaimed the Word at the liturgy. This young woman rose, strong and bright, to

offer that gift and, in doing so, brought wonderful life to the readings and to the community. After the celebration I made it a point to thank her and discovered that she will be leaving for the Netherlands in July to spend her last year of high school as an exchange student there.

I'm sure that you know that the folks at St. Mary's have no monopoly on warmth, hospitality or a spirit of joy in their gathering. You know better than that, and so do I. All I want to say here is that my visit to St. Mary's on Sunday afforded me a special opportunity to appreciate how appealing and beautiful it is when a parish communicates a spirit of joy and welcome to those who gather with them.

Do you experience that kind of spirit when you go to your parish church on Sunday? Do you have a sense that you are recognized? Welcomed? Appreciated? Valued? If you do, what are the concrete reasons that you feel that way?

And if you don't, what could you and others do to change things so that the environment, the tone and spirit of your parish community might be warmer and more inviting?

Surely, we all have bad days. Persons do. Families do. Parishes do. But Jesus told us that he came that we might have his joy and that our joy might be complete. If we don't somehow experience and communicate joy, then we're missing something Our Lord dearly wants us to have. Think about it.

Peace to all.

## NOTICE:

In last week's paper we inadvertently ran the April Monthly Prayer Request for Priests Calendar instead of the May Calendar. The correct calendar is listed below.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

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A new monthly calendar will appear in the Catholic Courier on the last Thursday of each month.

## PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

The following prayer was dictated by Our Lord to Sister Josefa Menendez at Poitiers, France, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 3, 1921, with the instruction: "Josefa! Repeat these words every day."

### JESUS PRAYER FOR HIS PRIESTS

O Jesus, by Thy most loving Heart, I implore Thee to inflame with zeal for Thy love and glory all the priests of the world, all missionaries and those whose office it is to preach Thy word, that on fire with holy zeal, they may snatch souls from the devil and lead them into the shelter of Thy Heart, where for ever they may glorify Thee.

Imprimatur: E. Morrogh Bernard, Vic. Gen. Westminster, May 5, 1953

Mass  
Rosary  
Fasting  
Day Offering  
Offering of Sufferings  
Eucharistic Adoration  
Divine Mercy Chaplet

Or whatever the Lord inspires you to offer Him on behalf of His Priests.

**MAY, 1993**

DIocese of ROCHESTER, NY

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